## THE BANNER SERIES OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES

## Mrs. Prothero

By Booth Tarkington

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he felt sure that Trusion's gaze had ceased to rest upon himself, he turned to bend a surreptitious but piercing scrutlay upon his neighbor. His glance, however, sweeping across Trusion's shoulder toward the face, suddenly encountered another pair of eyes beyond, so intently fixed upon himself that he started. The clash was like two searchlights meeting—and the glorious brown eyes that shot into Alonzo's were not the eyes of Trusion.

Leaning back with extraordinary grace, in the chair nearest Trusion, sat the handsomest woman Alonzo had ever seen in his life. Her long coat of soft gray fur was unrecognizable to him in connection with any farmiliar breed of squirrel; her broad flat hat of the same fur was wound with a gray veil, underneath which her heavy brow. hair seemed to exhale a mysterious glow, and never, not even in a lithograph, had he seen features so regular or a skin to cisar! And to look into her eyes seemed to Alonzo like diving doop into clear water and turning to stare up at the light.

His own eyes fell first. In the breathless awkwardness that beset him they seem, do setumb shamefully down to his desk like a coentry beg, getting back to his set, ter a chashing on the technels phythorm. For the less that he seed the head of the seed of the seed of the seed of the less phythorm. It is not been friendly a save, profoundly found as it was, had not been friendly to him by the State onesed it with sempsels and

friendly.

He seized upon the fatts—of the expensive books supplied to him by the State, opened it with emphasis and began not to read it, with abysmal abstraction, linglingly alort to the circumstance that Truslow was holding a low-toned but lively conversation with the unknown. Her laugh came to him, at once musical, quiet, and of a quality which irritated him into saying bitterly to himself that he guessed there was just as much refinement in Stackpole as there was in the Capital City, and just as many old familles! The clerk calling his vote upon the "Basekual bill" at that moment, he roared "No!" in a tone which was profane. It seemed to him that he was avenging himself upon something, and it gave him a great deal of satisfaction.

He returned immediately to his imitation of Archi-

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It states that the satisfaction of the modes of the heard that he hiershity of his attention to the modes of the heard that he hiershity of his attention to the profound question beyond he reach the pursed his lips, looked up at the mediately, and settice his hand he satisfaction of the profound question beyond he reach of the heard that he profound the profound question beyond he reach of the heard almost immediately, and settice his hand he was also an one paper furnished by the State Stoward hunged the paper, wrote the capital letter "O's several hunged and the paper, wrote the capital letter "O's several hunged and paper, wrote the capital letter to the question of was he, apparently, to everything but the question of was he, apparently, to everything but the question of was he was adjourned of the him was traceral, when the made it a very short moment, indeed, to the shoulder.

"In a moment, Senator!" answered Alonzo in his deepsto thest tones. He made it a very short moment, indeed, for he had a wild, breath-taking suspicion of what was coming.

"I want you to meet Mrs. Protheres, Senator," said Truslow, rising, as Rawson, after folding his writings with infinite ears, placed them in his breast pocket.

"In an pleased to make your acquaintance, ma'am," Alonzo said in a loud, firm voice, as he got to his feet, though the place grew vague about him when the lady stretched a charming, slender, gloved hand to him across Truslow's desk. He gave it several solemn shakes.

"We shouldn't have disturbed you, perhaps?" she asked, smilling radiantly upon him. "You were at some important work, I'm afraid."

He met her eyes again, and their beauty and the thoughtful kindliness of them fairly took his breath. "I am the chairman, m

rylinder of fur.

"Truslow, offered his hand to the lady. "Come over to the club, Senator, and lunch with me," he said. "Mrs. Protheroe won't mind



'You Wild Ass of the Prairies," said Battle

A committee of women from a church society was waiting in the corridor, and he had rounded up a reluctant half dozen Senators and led them forth to be interrogated as to their intentions regarding the bill. The committee and the lawmakers soon distributed themselves into little argumentative clumps, and Alonzo found himself in the centre of these, with one of the ladies, who had, unfortunately—but, in her enthusiasm, without misgivings—begun a reproachful appeal to an advocate of the bill whose name was Goldstein.

"Senator Goldstein," she exclaimed, "I could not believe it when I heard that you were in favor of this measure! I have heard my husband speak in the highest terms of your old father. May I ask you what he thinks of it? If you voted for the desocration of Sunday by a low baschall game, could you dare go home and face that good old man?"

"Yes, madame," said Goldstein, mildly; "we are both Jews."

Jews. madame," said Goldstein, mildly; "we are both Jews."

A low laugh rippled out from nearby, and Alonzo, turning almost volently, beheld his lady of the furs. She was leaning back against a broad priaster, her hands sweeping the same big coat behind her, her face turned toward him, but her eyes, sparklingly delighted, rested upon Goldstein. Under the broad fur hat she made a picture as enraging, to Alonzo Rawson, as it was bewitching. She appeared not to see him, to be quite unconscious of himand he believed it. Trusiow and five or six members of both houses were about her, and they all seefned to be bending eagerly toward her. Alonzo was furious with her. Her laugh lingered upon the air for a moment, then her glance sweet round the other way, omitting the Senator from Stackpole, who, immediately putting into proceed.



"Hat you are interested," she interrupted, "in defeating that builtyme," he returned. "It is an industous measure," "He you are interested," she interrupted, "in defeating that builtyme," he returned. "It is an industous measure," "He you have the returned to the property of the proper

very slowly, "and resign my job. I don't see as I've got any business in the Legislature."

"I don't understand you."

He shook his head mournfully. "It's a simple enough matter. I've studied out a good many bills and talked 'em over, and I've picked up some influence and—"

I know you have, 'she interrupted eagerly. "Mr. Tuslow says that the members of your brains and Dikes Committee follow your vote on every bill."

Tuslow says that the members of your brains and Dikes Committee follow your vote on every bill.

"I man said Alonzo Rawson meckly, "but I expect the said and the said a lesson this afternoon."

"You mean to say—"

"I mean that I didn't know what I was doing about that Baseball bill. I was just pig-headedly goin ahead sgainst it, not knowing nothing about the conditions, and it took a lady to show me what they were. I would have done a wrong thing if you hadn't stopped me."

"You mean," she cried, her splendid eyes widening with excitement and delight; "you mean that you—that you—"

"I mean that I will vote for the bill!" He struck his

was wondering drearily what he was to do with a clear plate and napkin which a courteous negro had handed him haif an hour earlier, when he felt a quick jerk at his sleeve. It was Truslow, who had worked his way along the wall, and who now, standing on tiptoe, spoke rapidly but cautiously, close to his ear.

"Senator, be quick," he said, sharply, at the same time alert to see that they were unobserved. "Mrs. Protheroe wants to speak to you at once. You'll find her near the big paims under the stairway in the hall."

He was gone—he had wormed his way half across the

He gave her one last look of pathetic tenderness and rose.

"The Senator from Stackpole!"

"I want," Alonzo begun, in his big voice; "I want to gay a few simple, straightforward but vigorous words about this bill. You may remember I spoke against it on its second reading."

"You did that!" shouted Senator Battle suddenly.
"I want to say now," the Senator from Stackpole continued, "that at that time I hadn't studied the subject sufficiently. I didn't know the conditions of the case, nor the facts, but since then a great light has broke in upon me—"

sufficiently. I didn't know the conditions of the ease, nor the facts, but since then a great light has broke in upon me—"

"I should say it had! I saw it break!" was Senator Battle's second violent interruption.

When order was restored. Alonzo, who had become very pale, summoned his voice again, "If think we'd ought to take into consideration that Sunday is the working man's only day of recreation, and not crive him into low groggeries, but give him a chance in the open air to induige his love of wholesome sport—"

"Such as the ancient Romans enjoyed!" interposed Battle, vindictively.

"No, sir!" Alonzo wheeled upon him, stung to the quick, "Such as the ancient Romans enjoyed!" interposed Battle, vindictively.

"No, sir!" Alonzo wheeled upon him, stung to the quick, "Such a sport as free-born Americans and only free-born Americans can play in this wide world—the American game of baseball, in which no other nation of the earth is our equal!"

This was a point scored, and the cheering lasted two minutes. Then the orator resumed:

"I say: "Give the working man a chance!" Is his life a happy one? You know it ain't! Give him his one day. Don't spoil it for him with your laws—he's only got one! I'm not going to take up any more of your time, but, it there's anybody here who thinks my well-considered opinion worth following, I say: 'Vote for this bill.' It is right and virtuous and canobiling, and it ought to be passed! I say: 'Vote for it.'

"Is yet reporters decided that the Senator from Stackpole had 'wakened things up." The gavel rapped a long time before the chair, or the properties of this honored leasureliness, "that I hope no member of this honored

The reporters decided that the Senator from Stackpole had "wakened things up." The gavel rapped a long time before the chamber quieted down, and when it did Josephus Battle was on his feet, and had obtained the recognition of the chair.

It wish to say right here," he began, with a rasping the same than the period of this, honored poly will be the same than the period of the light of the third than the period of the same time suddenly lifting his voice to an unprintable shriek.—'I say to you, sir, that the song of the siren has been heard in the land, and the call of Delliah has been answered! When the Senator from Stackpole rose in this chamber, less than the same of the siren has been heard in the land, and the call of Delliah has been answered! When the Senator from Stackpole rose in this chamber, less than the same of the same time same time suddenly lifting his voice to his high the same time same